



King County Mental Health Chemical Abuse and Dependency Services Division 2002 Briefing Paper

CHILDREN'S LONG-TERM INPATIENT PROGRAM

BACKGROUND:

There are currently 96 Children's Long-term Inpatient Program (CLIP) beds statewide. This number of beds is inadequate to address an ever-increasing demand for children's inpatient services. There are 1,520,643 children in the State of Washington. The current national prevalence figures would suggest that 11% or 167,000 children have serious emotional disturbances. Many children with serious emotional disturbances may need at least one hospitalization during their childhood.

Currently, and over the past 3-4 years, there have been waiting times for placements in CLIP facilities of between 60 and 90 days. Regional Support Networks (RSNs) and local communities are left trying to create programs that bridge the time between the authorization for the CLIP placement and the actual admission. These bridge strategies are sometimes effective and other times leave the child and the community at risk. Additionally, because of the up to 90 day wait times, the children's acute hospital system is forced to retain children in their facilities while awaiting a CLIP bed, and therefore cannot provide beds for youth who have been detained for acute mental disorders that leave the youth an imminent danger to themselves or others.

ISSUES/CHALLENGES:

1. There are an inadequate number of beds to address the need for children's long-term inpatient hospitalizations.
2. There are long waits (up to 90 days) between authorization for hospitalization and actual admission.
3. Discharging children from CLIP is a challenge when the Division of Child and Family Services (DCFS) does not have an adequate residential placement for the children or a family refuses to take a child back home following the CLIP hospitalization. Problematic discharges where children stay beyond the time needed to address their mental health needs add to the problem of not being able to get timely admissions.
4. Children awaiting a placement in CLIP after their authorization take up needed acute hospital beds, causing a lack of beds for children presenting with acute needs for hospitalization in local hospitals like Fairfax Hospital.

DATA:

Currently, there are 46 children from King County in CLIP. While KCRSN has often under-utilized the CLIP targeted bed day allocation established by the state for King County, this has occurred because the higher level of care needed for many King County children is only available at one facility, which has the longest wait lists.

RECOMMENDATION/LEGISLATIVE ACTION:

The State needs to address the need for a more timely and effective response to children who are in need of and authorized for long-term inpatient care. The State of Washington needs to review the adequacy of the capacity within the CLIP system and come up with a remedy for the long waits for admission to CLIP and the challenges that the wait causes to the acute hospital system for children and youth.